

ISD Headlines from Across Texas (and the Nation)

Crowley district classes will get bigger due to layoffs

(Fort Worth Star-Telegram © 01/30/2010)

Parents and students in the Crowley school district can expect larger classes next school year after the Board of Trustees declared that the district must make significant cuts, including layoffs, to balance its 2010-11 budget. The board voted 7-0 late Thursday to approve staffing guidelines for the next school year, followed by another 7-0 vote to declare "financial exigency."

FBISD must cut \$18 million for next budget. School district has had deficit budgeting for two years

(Fort Bend Star © 02/04/2010)

FBISD must cut \$18 million for next budget School district has had deficit budgeting for two years By B.K. Carter Fort Bend ISD leaders are currently in the process of trying to reduce the district's budget by \$18 million. According to an email FBISD Superintendent Dr. Tim Jenney sent out to staff members last Friday, the school ...

Austin school board to discuss financial emergency

(Austin American-Statesman © 02/08/2010)

School board to discuss The Austin school district board members tonight will discuss whether they should declare the district in a state of financial crisis, as well as get details on a proposed time line in dealing with its multi-year low performing schools.

Denton ISD faces budget shortfalls

(Denton Record-Chronicle © 02/15/2010)

It's apparent the economic downturn has hit Denton schools, the district's superintendent said. A drop in attendance and slower-than-expected enrollment growth this school year will force Denton to dig deeper into its reserves this year and find ways to cut costs for the 2010-11 year. Superintendent Ray Braswell said last week that the district's deficit for this year could top \$4 million.

Superintendent talks hiring freeze at high schools

(Houston Chronicle © 02/13/2010)

In an effort to cut costs in the 2010-11 budget, Spring Branch Independent School District Superintendent Duncan Klusmann proposed two moves that would increase the ratio of students to teachers at the elementary and high school levels at the school board's Feb. 8 workshop. The school district could institute a hiring freeze for teachers at the high school level and also apply for waivers from the Texas Education Agency, where necessary, to put class size above the state mandated 22-1 ratio at the elementary level.

Austin trustees weigh job cut options

(Austin American-Statesman © 02/17/2010)

With federal stimulus money disappearing soon, an anticipated \$7 million 2010-11 shortfall and more than \$50 million needed for new programs, Austin school district administrators Monday again made the case for declaring a fiscal crisis. But if the comments made in Monday night's school board meeting are any indication, trustees don't appear ready to declare one — at least for now.

How HISD Might be Facing a \$57 Million Shortfall Next School Year

(Houston Press © 02/19/2010)

The Houston Independent School District might be facing a shortfall in public education funding of as much as \$57 million in the next fiscal year starting July 1, 2010. That less than happy news was delivered at this morning's school board agenda meeting, in a power point demonstration by HISD attorney David Thompson.

Austin school trustees asked to cut more jobs, cover bigger shortfall

(Austin American-Statesman © 02/21/2010)

Amid troubling revenue projections and carrying a wish list of new school programs, Austin school district administrators now say they need to cut more than 100 jobs and find nearly \$64 million in extra funds to meet fiscal and academic goals in the 2010-11 school year. A tax rate hike could be needed as early as 2012, administrators said.

School board OKs plan to cut programs, jobs

(Austin American-Statesman © 02/23/2010)

The Austin school board met past midnight Monday with a packed agenda that included controversial proposals to redraw school boundaries in Southwest Austin, possibly turn failing schools over to outside management and possibly declare the district in a state of impending fiscal crisis, which would allow Superintendent Meria Carstarphen to cut more than 100 positions.

Fort Worth school district declares financial exigency for 2nd year

(Fort Worth Star-Telegram © 02/24/2010)

The school district declared a financial state of emergency for the second year in a row as officials try to get a handle on their budget woes. Trustees voted 5-3 Tuesday night to continue what is called its state of "financial exigency," a step required by the state if the district eliminates jobs.

Depleting reserves a bad idea for Fort Worth school district

(Fort Worth Star-Telegram © 03/01/2010)

With \$55 million, the Fort Worth school district can operate for a little more than a month. But the Texas Education Agency advises districts to keep at least two months' worth of operating funds in savings in case of an emergency. Without adequate reserves, a school district could be forced to borrow money to pay its bills -- an expensive proposition that shouldn't happen if it's avoidable.

NEISD To Eliminate 138 Positions

(San Antonio KSAT (ABC) 12 © 03/02/2010)

The Northeast Independent School District board announced on Monday that they are moving ahead with plans to eliminate positions by releasing some staff members in an effort to save nearly \$7 million towards next year's budget. The board approved recommendations by the district's human resources department to eliminate 138 positions for next school year, including 92 teachers at ...

Keller district may ask voters for higher tax rate

(Fort Worth Star-Telegram © 03/03/2010)

Keller school district officials may ask voters this summer to raise the tax rate to avoid what the superintendent calls drastic budget cuts. The outlook for the 2010-11 budget is grim unless voters approve an increase, Superintendent James Veitenheimer has told trustees.

LISD faces growing population, shrinking budget

(Austin News 8 © 03/05/2010)

Around this time of year, school districts across the state are crunching numbers and preparing to deal with budget shortfalls. Leander Independent School District is one of them, gearing up for a potential \$6 million gap. Thursday night, the school board met to discuss how the shortfall may impact the district's need for the creation of new classes. "We're opening up 11th grade at two new high schools this year, and we've got to have staff for that," Dick Ellis with LISD said.

HISD 'transformation' leaves 631 jobs uncertain

(Memorial Examiner © 03/05/2010)

They weren't exactly pink slips. But to hundreds of HISD employees, they were definitely gray. The district Thursday informed 631 employees that their jobs were being reclassified or eliminated, due to the structural reorganization of the HISD offices from regional to central direction. Some of those positions are also in jeopardy because of expiring stimulus funds in 2011.

HISD serving up far-ranging cafeteria cutbacks

(Houston Chronicle © 03/08/2010)

More than 425 cafeteria workers in the Houston school district will have their wages slashed this month, dozens of other positions will be cut and students likely will pay more for lunch next year to cover a multimillion budget shortfall. The Houston Independent School District also is expected to take the rare step this year of spending \$10.5 million from savings -- about 3 percent of the ...

Fort Bend ISD trustees approve financial exigency resolution

(Fort Bend Sun © 03/10/2010)

The message was clear at Monday night's regular board meeting as board members declared a "financial

exigency" in response to the district's current budget crisis. "Without a significant change in the district's expenditure patterns or a change in the state funding formula, the district is projected to be fiscally unstable in three years," board president Bob Broxson said.

FISD may see more than budget cuts

(Friendswood Journal © 03/10/2010)

Friendswood's largest employer may be forced to lay off employees. Friendswood Independent School District, the city's largest employer with nearly 700 workers, is facing a \$700,000 deficit which could force the district to cut jobs. "The teachers already know about this. They already know we're cutting the budget.

UCISD budget deficit could be as much as \$2.2 million

(Uvalde Leader News © 03/12/2010)

Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District's financial deficit was once again a subject of conversation during the board of trustees meeting held Tuesday in the Uvalde High School library. Executive director of business services Keith Southerland said more than likely the deficit for the current school year's operating budget will fall somewhere between \$399,048 and \$2.2 million.

Job cuts in La Marque ISD will go deeper than administrators originally thought

(Houston KHOU (CBS) 11 © 03/16/2010)

Potential job cuts in the La Marque school district will go deeper than district administrators originally had thought, with as many as 61 jobs cut, Superintendent Ecomet Burley said. Facing a \$5 million shortfall next school year, school trustees gave Burley the go ahead to develop a plan to trim jobs from the district's payroll.

Pearland ISD Trustees tackle budget problems

(Pearland Journal © 03/17/2010)

Despite an anticipated \$4.5 million dollar budget shortfall, Pearland ISD board members gave the nod to hiring 27 new teachers next year at last week's meeting. Based on an increase of 576 students, PISD Chief Financial Officer Don Marshall told the trustees he recommended adding 27 new teachers for the upcoming school year. In addition, he asked trustees to consider giving an across the board raise of \$500 to teachers and administrators and \$250 to clerical and manual trades positions.

Leander ISD continues tough budget discussions

(Hill Country News © 03/18/2010)

Last week I addressed how LISD is striving to ensure high quality communication with our community, and so today I'd like to expand on the realities of our current financial situation. As I'm certain you've heard, Texas public schools are in rough straits when it comes to school finance. While we in Leander ISD have taken steps over the last few years to minimize the effect of this on our district, we still find ourselves having to make some tough decisions on how we will continue to operate within the limits of our budget.

Aledo board approves reduced pay scale for 2010-11 school year

(Fort Worth Star-Telegram © 03/25/2010)

Aledo school trustees formally adopted a scale of across-the-board pay reductions Tuesday, part of a package of budget cuts aimed at negating a \$3.7 million shortfall in the district's 2010-11 preliminary budget. The salary cuts were announced earlier, along with staff reductions.

'Blood on the streets'?

(Houston Chronicle © 03/24/2010)

The looming budget shortfall of at least \$11 billion (assuming there is more than \$1 billion freed from the school fund) for the next two-year budget period is consuming lawmakers' attention. But the Select Committee on Fiscal Stability, headed by Rep. John Otto, R-Dayton, is looking further into the future.

AISD budgets for deficit with efficiency savings, no teacher raise

(Austin Community Impact © 03/26/2010)

District aims to save money while building toward strategic plan In late February Austin Independent School District released its preliminary budget, which proposes cutting \$13.1 million in expenses. The proposal aims to help the district avoid a \$7.1 million deficit and make a "down payment" on the strategic plan.

Fabens school district making pre-k cuts

(El Paso KVIA (ABC) 7 © 03/26/2010)

The nation's economic turmoil claims more jobs in the Borderland. At a board meeting about two weeks ago, officials with the Fabens Independent School District were faced with a difficult decision: budget cuts. "It's very frustrating!" exclaims Velia Reyes.

Cy-Fair ISD considers big changes

(Houston KHOU (CBS) 11 © 03/26/2010)

Harris County's second-largest school district is considering big changes to plug a projected \$10 million deficit next fiscal year. Administrators at the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District said they've slashed \$56 million over the past three years.

School board to try again on job cuts

(Galveston Daily News © 03/28/2010)

Facing a March 31 deadline to inform contract employees they faced being laid off, La Marque school trustees will meet Monday morning to explore job cuts to trim about \$2.4 million from next year's budget. As many as 61 jobs could be cut as the district tries to stave off a pending \$5 million budget shortfall.

LISD facing financial crisis, superintendent says

(Lufkin Daily News © 03/28/2010)

Lufkin ISD, due to major shortfalls in state aid, will need to take a close look at its budget for the 2010-2011 school year, according to Superintendent Roy Knight, who says the district is in a budget crisis. Three years ago, a property tax reduction took place through the state legislature, cutting revenue to the schools by 30 percent, Knight said.

Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD considers freezing teachers' salaries to reduce budget deficit

(Dallas Morning News © 03/27/2010)

Carrollton-Farmers Branch school district trustees are looking at possibly freezing teacher salaries as one way to reduce the school district's budget deficit. No final decisions have been made, and it is early in the budget planning process for next year. District officials said teachers could also end up with a 2.5 percent raise.

HISD could face \$25m shortfall, more cuts, Grier says

(Bellaire Examiner © 03/31/2010)

In anticipation of Thursday's scheduled budget update for the HISD 2010-'11 school year, the district's chief financial officer, Melinda Garrett, greeted Superintendent Terry Grier with some unsettling news Tuesday morning. More job cuts are coming.

DISD needs \$125 million loan

(Dallas Morning News © 03/31/2010)

The school board will meet briefly this afternoon to consider borrowing \$125 million to tide the district over until state aid arrives in the fall. This is the same measure the board was to consider last week but didn't because the district could not pin down its bank on an interest rate in time to present the papers to the board.

Some DC Public Schools to Face Budget Shortfalls Under Mayor's Proposal .

(Washington Post © 4/3/2010)

The Washington Post reported that D.C. Mayor Adrian M. Fenty's (D) "education spending plan for 2011 would increase per-student funding for citywide programs but freeze a key stream of money that goes directly to schools, sharply squeezing their programs, according to documents submitted to the D.C. Council. When he unveiled his budget Thursday, Fenty (D) highlighted a proposed \$175 per-student increase in funding for the 75,000 students in the city's regular and charter schools, to \$8,945." However, according to the Post, direct "funding to the District's 123 public schools under Fenty's plan would remain at the current \$614.3 million in the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1," which would lead to "funding shortages because of annual cost increases, most of them involving salaries and benefits for teachers and administrators."

New Jersey School Districts Brace for Budget Cuts

(New York Times © 4/3/2010)

Montclair, Westfield, Cresskill and other public school districts in New Jersey "have long attracted families because they offer some of the best public education in the state. But now many of these top school systems

are preparing to reduce the academic and extracurricular opportunities that have long set them apart." Gov. Christopher J. Christie (R), "striving to close a budget deficit that he says is about \$11 billion, has proposed reducing direct aid to nearly 600 districts by an amount equal to as much as 5 percent of their operating budgets."

New Jersey School Districts Planning Layoffs. Cuts to Services due to State Budget Cuts

(New Jersey's Star-Ledger © 4/6/2010)

"With New Jersey school districts planning layoffs and sweeping cuts to services, school budget elections are the talk of most towns as the April 20 vote nears." According to Gov. Chris Christie (R), education funding cuts "are necessary to help clean up the state's historic budget mess." He is asking districts to renegotiate "teacher contracts, which call for raises of more than 4 percent." The Star-Ledger provides details on Christie's plan for education cuts and a search tool to look up the amount of state aid individual districts received this year and are set to receive next year.

Some Omaha-Area School Districts Combining Grades to Saves Money

(Omaha World-Herald © 4/6/2010)

Combining second and third-grade classes at Jackson Elementary School has saved money for the Omaha public school system. "This year, there are 27 multi-grade classes in the district. In the fall, 47 are planned," as Omaha "looks to trim 44 full-time teaching positions through attrition." The district must "make up for more than \$28 million in federal stimulus funding that ends in a year." The Omaha World Herald adds that other Omaha-area districts are using the "largely budget-driven classroom approach" of combining grade levels. NAESP president, Diane Cargile, "said multi-grade classes aren't ideal from an academic standpoint because the teacher has to teach two grades at once." But, she added that "economics around the country are making the practice more common."

Wake County, North Carolina, Schools Face \$20 Million in State Budget Cuts

(North Carolina News & Observer © 4/7/2010)

"Wake County school leaders are bracing for a new round of \$20 million in state budget cuts for this fall at a time when plans already call for layoffs, later start times for most students and higher school meal prices." A plan on "where the cuts would be made will be presented to a school board committee next week." In addition to the state cuts, Wake's chief business officer, David Neter, told the school board "that the district is facing a projected \$5 million shortfall in this year's revenues in the areas of fines and forfeitures, interest income and e-rate income." Last week, departments were ordered "to freeze non-essential spending. He said he's hoping the freeze will allow the district to save \$5 million."

North East ISD eying plans to tighten its belt another notch

(San Antonio Business Journal © Week of 04/02-08/2010)

North East Independent School District (NEISD) officials say more budget trimming may be in the pipeline for the district as it confronts a lack of adequate funding to cover educational needs.

As California Defers Payments, Some School Districts Take Out Loans To Cover Expenses

(Sacramento Bee © 4/8/2010)

California "sends fewer dollars to...schools these days -- a total of \$18 billion less over the last two years." Moreover, "much of the money districts do receive is coming late -- sometimes as much as five months after the payments originally were scheduled." In a letter dated March 30, the state Department of Finance said that "districts collectively should expect three one-time deferrals of \$2.5 billion next school year." Only school districts that are facing bankruptcy may choose to opt-out of the deferred payments. Some school districts throughout the state are having to take out loans to cover expenses, though the Bee points out that "so far, most local districts have managed to avoid taking out loans" by "juggling finances through layoffs and program cuts, digging into reserves and borrowing from funds dedicated for other expenses, such as pensions and facilities."